



**Doing  
the  
Most  
Good**

# The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services The Independent Living Skills Program



## NA HO`OLA PONO

**"Moving Towards a Life of Righteousness"**

### Doing the Most Good

On November 11, 2008 which was Veteran's Day and a non-instructional day for students, the 9th and 10th graders from the participating ILSP schools gave up their time and got together to do a community service project. The ILSP program selected the Salvation Army Chapel to perform their community service project and stress to our youth good citizenship. The youth performed several tasks and prepared table settings for 600 people, the number Salvation Army is expected to feed. These people included the homeless population, senior citizens and less fortunate families in our communities for Thanksgiving. This year's Thanksgiving was especially important due to these hard pressed eco-

nomic times.

Besides doing the prep work for their Thanksgiving luncheon, our youth were informed that they would be passing out invitations to some of the senior citizens in our community. Our volunteers had to pass out invitations to three of Hilo's senior centers. At first most of the volunteers were leery about confronting old people, but as the day progressed they all felt more comfortable and actually enjoyed their experiences. Some of the elders did not want the kids to leave. The hardest part for our youth was explaining to the seniors that they had to leave and pass out more invitations, as these senior citizens really wanted to talk story with our youth.

After passing out the invitations the Salvation Army church provided all the youth volunteers with lunch, fruit drinks and goodie bags for work well done. They explained to the youth, that the difference they all made was not limited to the chapel facilities, but also for less fortunate people and families that use the facilities. It took a lot of work, but everyone realized that they made a positive difference not only for the church and it's members, but for themselves as well. All the hard work donated was well worth giving up a day off.



**A small group  
making a BIG difference!**

The Salvation Army-Family Intervention  
Services  
Na Ho'ola Pono  
Independent Living Program

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### Mission Statement

**"To provide youth with skills for a healthy life and to instill purpose, hope and vision to youth and their families."**



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Na Ho'ola Pono  
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### Show Me the Money!

On November 7, 2008, the staff of ILP were invited to attend the University of Hawaii at Hilo Financial Aid Workshop for High School Counselors. Even though we are not high school counselors, our invitation to attend these financial aid work-

shops validate our program as a viable college recruiting resource.

At the workshop we learned of the financial aid resources available to students that have aspirations of attending college as

their post high option. We learned of the new changes the federal government have made to the 2009-2010 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Some of the changes will have great benefits to not only foster youth, but for (see Money page 4)



# Toys for Tots: Remembering the Less Fortunate

Christmas is a good time to bring joy to others, but for youth in foster care, it's harder to feel the Christmas joy. Once again ILP has developed an activity that our ILP participants has once again found the joy simply by trying to bring happiness to those that are less fortunate. The past four years, ILP has chosen as a community service project to wrap gifts donated by Toys 4 Tots to the Dept. of Human Service Child Welfare Services. These donated gifts are expected to go to a lot of the younger youth placed in foster care.

On December 16 and 17, 2009, we arranged for our ILP participants to gift wrap at the Hilo and Pahoa CWS

units.

Some of our youth admitted that they aren't sure if they know how to wrap gifts, but by the end of each activity, we ended up with a good group of accomplished wrappers.

On the 16th of December, we wrapped gifts at the DHS-CWS State Building in Hilo. Every year our volunteers are greeted with broad smiles as the DHS-CWS staff welcomes our group. There was one DHS-CWS staff who told of her story being in



ILP participants doing their version of "Wrapping it up" at the State Bldg. DHS-CWS.

foster care and not receiving any gift while the biological siblings of her foster home got presents. She felt of lesser value than the people in her temporary home. Couple that with not being with her family created a holiday of sorrow instead of joy. It was at an Angel Tree project that someone had chosen her name

that was attached to the tree and bought a gift for her. These people were total strangers to her, yet shared a gift with her. (page 3 Toys)

## Things are Going to Change by Keelia Penovaroff

*I asked a former youth of ILP to write of her story about transitioning into adulthood and this is her story.*

My name is Keelia Penovaroff and I have a story for anyone who felt like they had nowhere to run to, no one to talk to and has come to a point where life just doesn't seem worth living anymore. I have felt this way before. At the age of eight, I was taken out of my home because my mother had developed a habit that she couldn't get out of. I thank her for this though because if I didn't go through all of this I wouldn't be telling my story right now. I was raised in an unstable home with drugs and physical abuses. I've never had anyone to look up to and felt very lost. Through these trying times, I felt miserable and neglected. I was not only physically abused, but mentally and emotionally abused too. For about four years I went through several homes and with every move I felt more and more unwanted. I went through this period thinking that there was some-

thing wrong with me. Why didn't anyone care that all I really wanted was someone to understand and listen to me. Finally I was placed in a home where I was put through even more struggles. I felt like I was trapped in a pit and every time I would try to climb up to reach the surface, I would slide all the way back down to the bottom. There was absolutely nothing I could do to shake this empty, suffocating depression. With no inspiration, encouragement or support, I was defiantly not seeing the light I desperately needed. I was this lonely, depressed person. I was last on everyone's list, because no one knew that I was feeling this way. I held it all within me. I never got used to my foster mom's hurtful words that were thrown at me daily. I was miserable and felt that I had no way out. Until one day I met a man most people refer to as Uncle Kalani. I saw that he had that light I so desperately needed. Even though Uncle Kalani was considered a stranger to me, he con-

vinced me that he cared for me and that I meant something and was important. I believed him and developed an instant bond for him and the encouragement that I direly needed. Uncle Kalani made me realize that life IS worth living and that I CAN take back control of my life. I actually started feeling good about myself and my future slowly began to focus again. All it took was someone to believe in me and to tell me that **THING ARE GOING TO CHANGE.** Uncle's famous words seem ridiculous and silly to me at first, but in the back of my mind I kept repeating it over and over again and when challenged, I found that I became strong enough to give it my all and get through every obstacle anyone threw at me.

I graduated from high school and I just completed my first semester of college. (page 3 see Change)

**"nowhere to run to, no one to talk to and it's come to the point where life just doesn't seem worth living for."**

## Toys *(continue from page 2)*

The whole reason for the DHS-CWS staff sharing her story was for the ILP volunteers to understand the positive difference they were making to a young child in foster care having to cope with the holidays away from family. To have our youth envision the moment a child will open the gift they laboriously wrapped and see this big smile that is oftentimes sorely needed, fueled their efforts more.

Some of the ILP volunteers got to speak with their social workers and to show them that they can do positive things as well. Our ILP youth also got the opportunity to meet other ILP youth from the different ILP participating schools.

## What's New?

As some of you know, Uncle Glenn has left the Independent Living Program and is now overseeing the Foster Alumni Group with funds provided by the Victoria and Bradley Geist Foundation. Uncle Glenn has been good for the ILP program and will continue to help whenever he can, but his knowledge and expertise will be vital for those

## Change *(continue from page2)*

Yes, those same words that seemed ridiculous and silly became actions and I made it. I really have to thank Uncle Kalani and the ILP program for showing me that there is hope even though life can make you feel like there's no way out. There always is. If you have nothing to hold on to, I want you to look inside yourself and I know there will be a goal or dream that you want to achieve. Make and hold on to that dream and goal that can only create a greater hope for you and your future. If you stick to

Both days were met with huge smiles and a good feeling of accomplishing something good and positive.

All of the presents that was there to wrap, was wrapped except for the Pahoa DHS unit which ran out of wrapping paper.

On both days, ILP had ordered pizzas and sodas. We also had passed out certificates of participation and their service to the community through volunteering was recognized with another certificate.

This activity was also shared by Uncle Warren's middle school group, which fit in easily with the high school ILP groups. Like the different schools, so

foster youth that have existed the foster care system.

ILP would like to introduce two new workers. Taking Uncle Glenn's place will be Uncle Warren. Besides helping Uncle Kalani with the ILSP high school, he also has restarted the ILSP Middle school groups. Another new ILP worker is Cheryl Dias. Her primary responsibility is also assisting foster youth who has existed the foster care system. These two new workers

your dreams and aspirations, no matter what, if you believe you can do it, then you absolutely will and can. Overcoming all the struggles that foster youth usually have to endure, believe it or not, will make you become a stronger person. We are all expected to take on additional challenges after foster care, it doesn't all stop there. You need to put back that important belief in yourself and you will beat the challenges that we must face everyday. I thank all those who have taken the time to read my story and I hope that you all know that Uncle Kalani and programs like the ILP will show you the light as well.



ILP participants at Pahoa DHS-CWS unit doing the most good by wrapping gifts donated by Toys 4 Tots. Good job!!!

be it with the different age groups. Different schools and ages, but one program, ILP East Hawaii - Good Job!

has the passion and energy to help guide foster youth towards future successes. Good Luck to them and it is ILP's hope that our youth will reap great benefits with the new additions that we have working for ILP



and the youth we serve. Welcome aboard Uncle Warren & Auntie Cheryl.



*Keelia is in her second semester at Hawaii Community College-West Hawaii Campus and enrolled in the Culinary Arts and Hotel Hospitality programs. Even though she was in guardianship, the day after she graduated from Pahoa high school, she was asked to leave her home of 7 years. She is now stabilized with her older biological sister and embarking on her new beginning and after reading her story I know that, "Things are definitely going to Change". Good Luck!!*





## Clarifying the Path Towards College



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### Moving Towards a Life of Righteousness"

#### College Check List

1. Complete the Kama`aina Application form.
2. Submit proof of TB Clearance and MMR immunization to Admission Office.
3. Take the college Compass test (reading, writing and math) call 933-3219. Photo ID & Social Security number required.
4. Attend new Student Orientation, Advising & Registration (SOAR)
5. Apply for Financial Aid

On October 16, 2008, Veteran's Day holiday, we conducted a World of Work fieldtrip at Hawaii Community College. The theme of the WOW fieldtrip at Hawaii Community College was on, "Clarifying the Path Towards College". In the past when we conducted a WOW fieldtrip to either HawCC or the University of Hawaii at Hilo, we usually toured the campus to see what each institution had to offer. When we tour the respective campuses some of the students complained about touring some of different majors of studies, such as Culinary Arts and they felt they were wasting their time having to walk through programs they weren't interested in. They also became distractions for those that were interested in some of the areas of study we visited.

This year we decided to do something different. Since at least 80% of our ILP graduates chooses college as their post-high option, we decided instead to get the Student Services department

from Hawaii Community College in helping us to clarify the path towards college. Staff from each Student Services department did presentations to our youth attending. The offices were Admission & Records, Financial Aid office, Counseling & Advising, Testing Centers and Career Center. During lunch, HawCC Student Government and other organized student clubs gave a presentation on "Student Life Outside the Classroom". Our students got valuable information that ILP hopes will give our youth definite advantages over other students applying for college. Both filing for financial aid and the admission processes can be an intimidating experience without proper help and assistance. I know every year, since we schedule this event on a holiday, students complain that they could be sleeping in late or cruising the beach, but their presence validated their sincerity towards a positive future.

## Money

(Continue from page 1)

other youth in "out of home" situations. For example, the federal government has expanded a question on the previous FAFSA application inquiring about foster care status from one question to five questions. If you can answer at least yes to one of the questions, you will be eligible to apply for financial aid as a dependency override, which usually equate to more financial aid assistance which means more free money.

The Independent Living Skills Program are now working in partnership with Hawaii Community College to conduct a FAFSA workshop at the college. This workshop is scheduled for January 5, 2009. The Financial Aid

department at Hawaii Community College has been very accommodating for our ILP program. They will be providing some of their staff from the college's financial aid department to help our graduating seniors complete their FAFSA application with online access to 25 computers. In coordinating this important activity, it's not only the students that are grateful for the opportunity to initiate the process of securing vital financial assistance to go to college, but even for the college that feels an early start in applying for financial aid will make their job a lot easier. It is our hope to have at least 60% of our high school graduates completing their FAFSA application on this day. We also will be sharing this activity with the Foster



Here is the ILP staff with the Financial Aid Directors of both Hawaii Community College and the University of Hawaii at Hilo.

Alumni Group and the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition Senior Chapter.

If you will not be able to attend this important FAFSA workshop on

January 5, please contact the ILP staff to show you the money.